

**Written Testimony of Susan Eastwood,
Before the Connecticut General Assembly
Energy and Technology Committee, March 15, 2011,
in support of Senate Bill 1, AN ACT CONCERNING
CONNECTICUT'S ENERGY FUTURE.**

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue.

My name is Susan Eastwood and I am a resident of Ashford, chair of the Ashford Clean Energy Task Force and a member of Conversations for a Green CT, an environmental group active in Eastern CT.

I am testifying in strong support of many aspects of SB 1, and I also have a few concerns. There are many reasons to support this bill. Basically, the name says it all - An Act Concerning Connecticut's Energy Future. It has become clear that Connecticut needs a comprehensive energy plan, and this bill is a good start in the right direction. The stated purpose of this bill is to reduce energy costs and promote renewable energy so I will address both issues.

Energy efficiency measures are the most effective measures we can take to reduce energy costs. There are a number of positive elements in the bill in the area of energy efficiency, such as creating improved consumer financing programs for energy efficiency and renewable energy, and providing incentives for energy efficiency, combined heat and power and renewable energy. Supporting energy audits, for both business and residential sites, is an important way to promote energy efficiency and to support small businesses that will grow green jobs and our economy.

I also encourage you to increase support of renewable energy. Increasing renewable energy sources in CT will create jobs and new business opportunities; it will reduce the need to build new dirty power plants and transmission lines, and may even lower electricity costs. Most important, it will help to clean up our air and improve the health of many of our residents. Since solar is the most abundant renewable energy source, I feel that it should be our first priority. Encouragement and support of solar is an investment in the future of our state.

Unfortunately, SB 1 appears to cut support for solar by about half, a move which is of great concern to towns, residents and many small businesses in Connecticut. I am in favor of solar incentives which will make renewable more

affordable for the homeowner and provide the industry stability that will help bring down costs. Solar energy works in Connecticut and it is good for jobs, our health, and for building our state's economy.

I am very concerned about the section of this new bill that removes the limitations on hydropower that can qualify for Class I of the Renewable Portfolio Standard (section 8.) These changes could render the state's renewable energy requirement meaningless and use CT ratepayer dollars to subsidize Canadian hydro projects that already exist. The bill would open the floodgates to old, large and environmentally destructive hydropower at the expense of investments in new and cleaner sources of power like wind. I suggest that this be changed so that for any hydropower receiving Class I credits to be Low Impact Hydropower Institute (LIHI) is certified to protect river health.

There are a couple of points of particular interest to making the goals of energy efficiency and renewable energy more accessible to municipalities.

1) The new Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, which I support, should serve as a resource for municipalities. It should be a user friendly place for towns to find programs to help them reduce their energy use and switch to renewable energy, should help serve as a clearinghouse and facilitate information sharing among towns. It should administer a standardized Energy Savings Performance Contracting program to provide standardized documents and templates to take away the risk of performance contracting for towns.

2) The bill should allow towns to do "virtual net metering" where a renewable energy system that produces more electricity than one town facility needs can be credited against electricity used at other facilities in town.

3) It would also be helpful to require the electric and gas utilities to provide municipal energy usage information at no charge to municipalities in the electronic Energy Star Portfolio Manager format.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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